ANTONY JOHNSTON BEN TEMPLESMITH

DEAD SPACE™

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2 OF 6

$2.99

IMAGE COMICS PRESENTS

DEAD SPACE™

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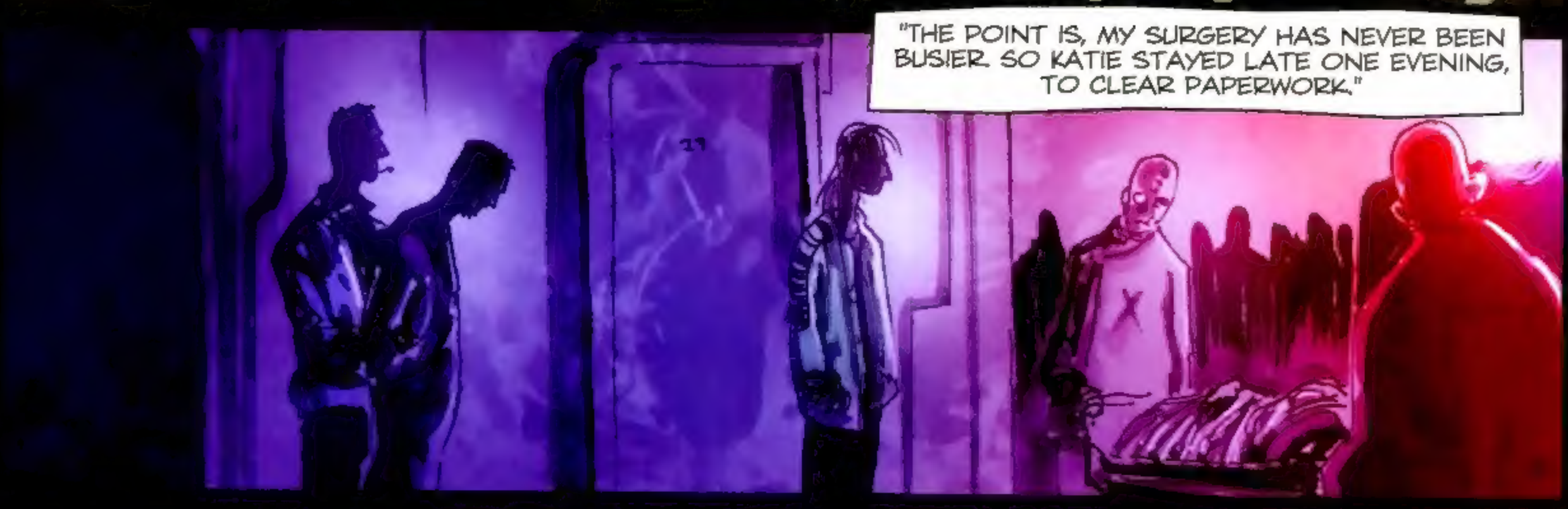
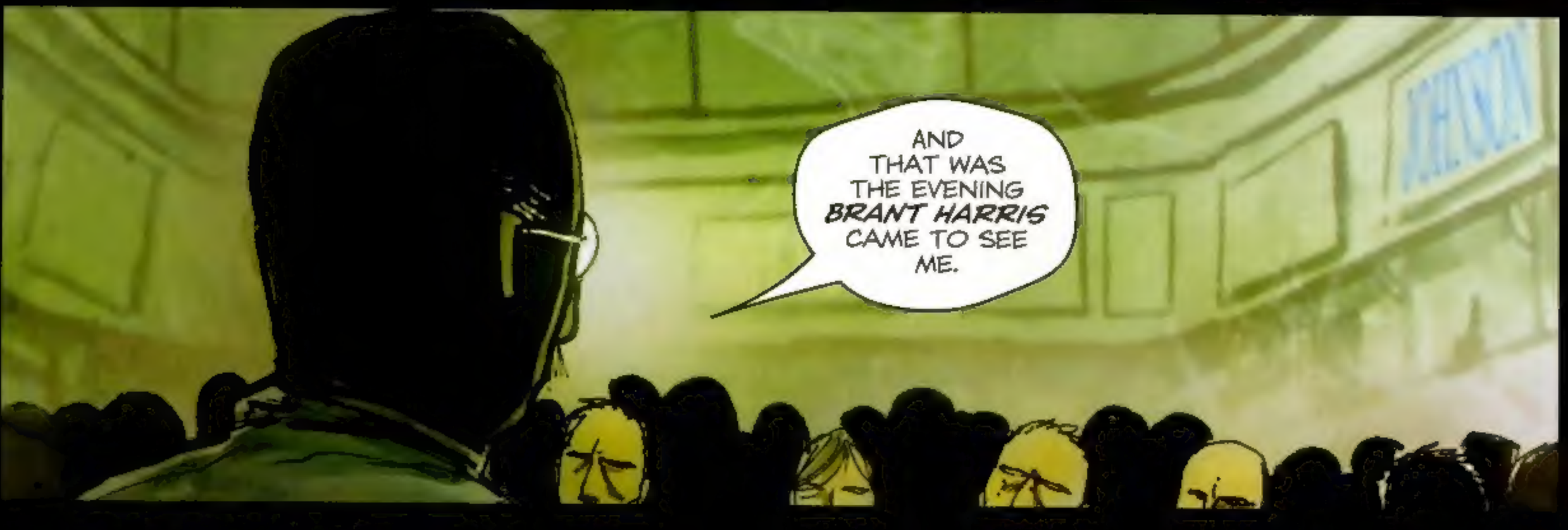
KATIE WAS MY ASSISTANT FOR FIVE YEARS. SHE WAS DEVOTED TO HER JOB, TO HELPING PEOPLE.

"BUT THAT DEVOTION GOT KATIE *KILLED*. SHE SHOULDN'T EVEN HAVE BEEN WORKING THAT DAY. BUT WITH ALL THE COLONY'S PROBLEMS..."

Union Square
COFFEE
CASEY'S
AS YOU KNOW, *EVERYONE'S* STRESSED RIGHT NOW. MANY OF YOU ARE PROBABLY EXPERIENCING IT YOURSELVES. YOU CAN'T SLEEP, YOU HAVE *BAD DREAMS* WHEN YOU DO...


"THE POINT IS, MY SURGERY HAS NEVER BEEN BUSIER. SO KATIE STAYED LATE ONE EVENING, TO CLEAR PAPERWORK."


AND THAT WAS THE EVENING *BRANT HARRIS* CAME TO SEE ME.

"KATIE SAVED MY LIFE. IF SHE HADN'T CALLED P-SEC, I'D BE LYING IN THE MORGUE RIGHT NOW, AND SHE'D BE UP HERE TELLING EVERYONE I WAS A WORKAHOLIC."

I'D GLADLY MAKE THAT EXCHANGE. AND I--
I KNOW YOU WOULD, TOM.

BUT THERE ARE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS YOU HAVE TO DO. YOU'VE GOT TO STOP THEM...
KATIE?

NO... NO, THIS ISN'T REAL...
TOM! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

SORRY, FOLKS, TOM'S NOT FEELING TOO GOOD. THANKS FOR COMING, AND WE'LL BE COLLECTING FOR KATIE'S FAMILY IN THE NEXT COUPLE DAYS.

OH, CHRIST... SHE'S GONE...

Apartment 35, Row A-7, D block

BRAM?

OH, *SHIT.* WHAT TIME IS IT?

0950. SHIFT STARTED 80 MINUTES AGO.

THIRD DAY IN A ROW, VERA. I CAN'T KEEP *COVERING* LIKE THIS. I MEAN, WE'RE ALL EXHAUSTED RIGHT NOW, BUT--

I CAN'T *SLEEP,* BRAM. THE DOC GAVE ME SOME PILLS, BUT THEY DON'T ALWAYS WORK.

YOU REALIZE YOU SOUND LIKE EVERY OTHER MINER WE'VE *ARRESTED* THIS PAST WEEK.

I *KNOW,* DAMMIT!

YOU *HALLUCINATING,* TOO? GETTING VISIONS OF YOUR PRECIOUS MARKER?

THAT'S NOT FAIR.

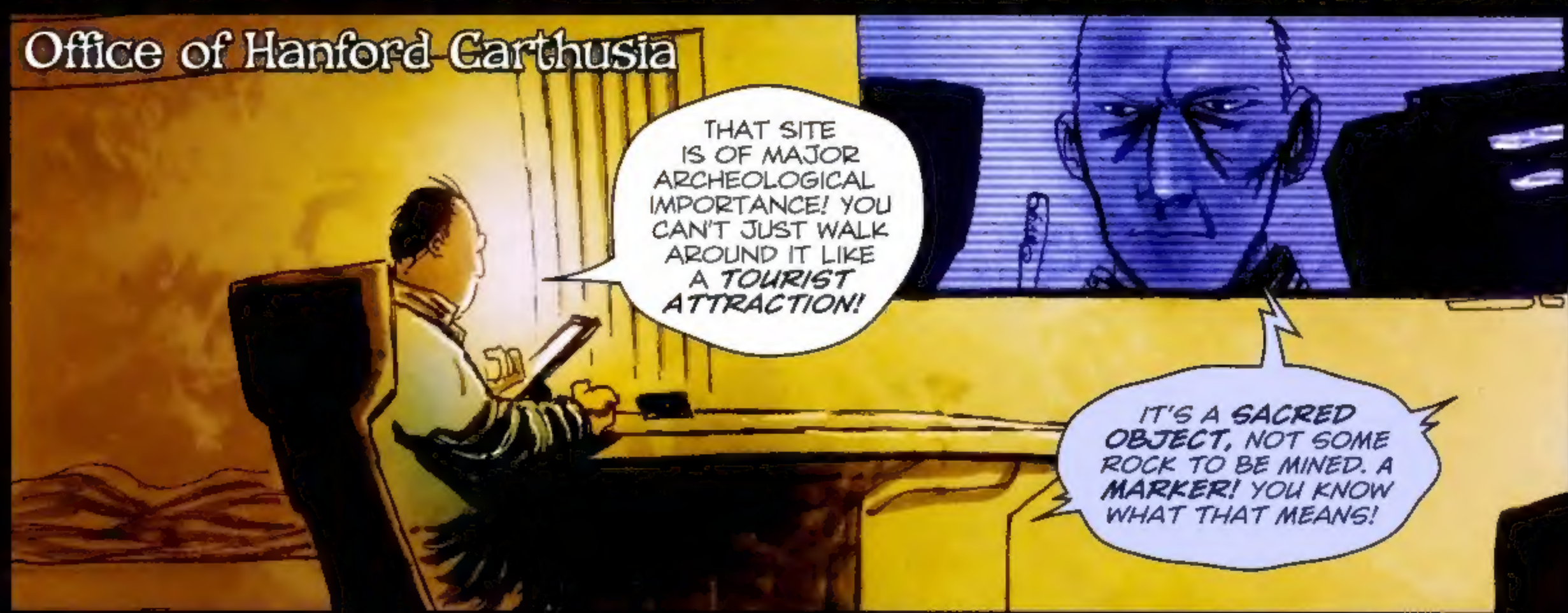
I'M JUST SAYING. SEEMS *ODD,* DOESN'T IT?

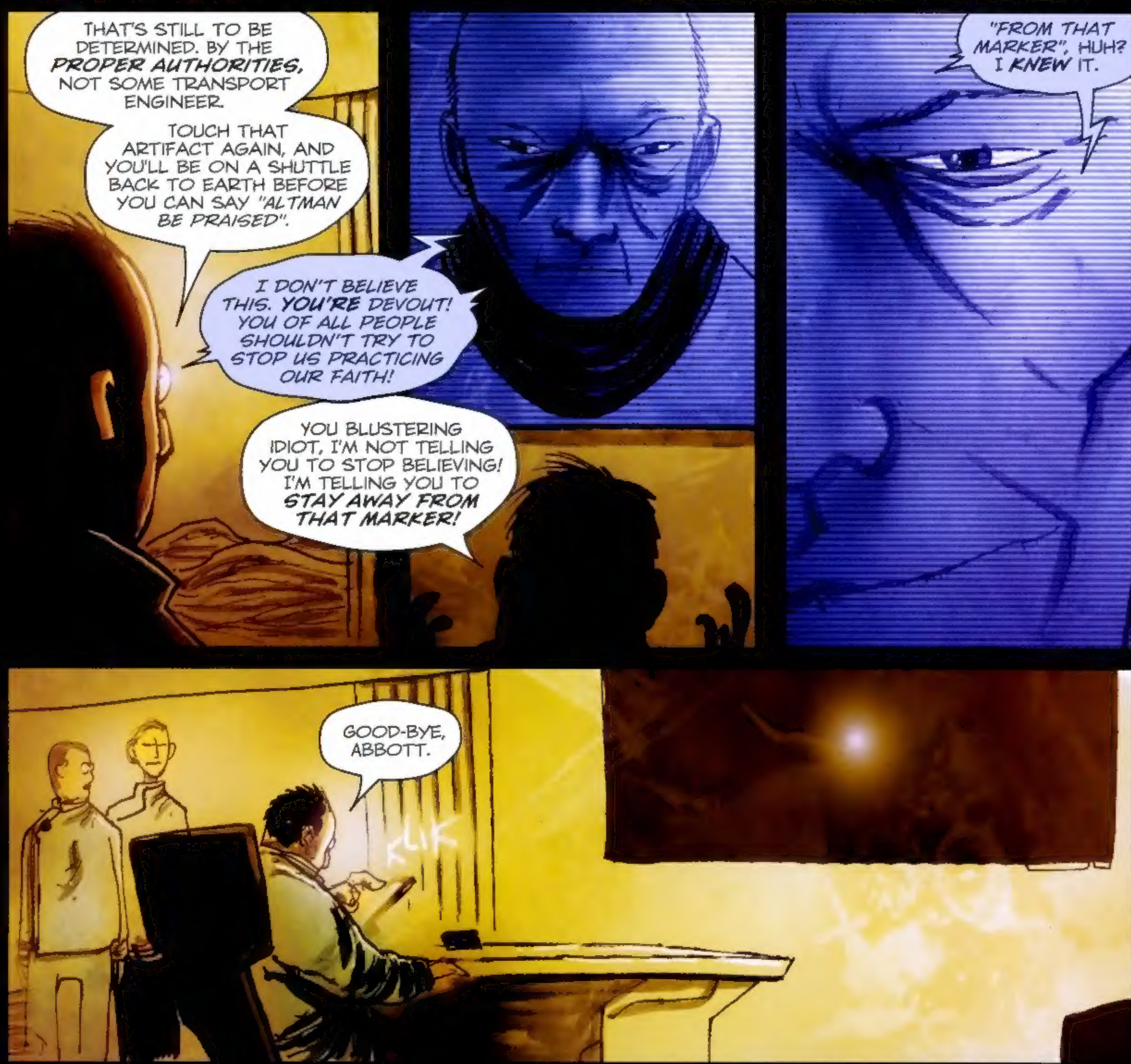
ALL RIGHT, THAT'S ENOUGH. *GET OUT!*

VERA, COME ON. WE'VE GOT A SHIFT TO WORK.

SO GO WORK IT. I'M GONNA TAKE A *SICK DAY.*

THIS IS OUTRAGEOUS!


Office of Hanford Carthusia
THAT SITE IS OF MAJOR ARCHEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE! YOU CAN'T JUST WALK AROUND IT LIKE A TOURIST ATTRACTION!
IT'S A SACRED OBJECT, NOT SOME ROCK TO BE MINED. A MARKER! YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS!


THAT'S STILL TO BE DETERMINED. BY THE PROPER AUTHORITIES, NOT SOME TRANSPORT ENGINEER.
TOUCH THAT ARTIFACT AGAIN, AND YOU'LL BE ON A SHUTTLE BACK TO EARTH BEFORE YOU CAN SAY "ALTMAN BE PRAISED".
I DON'T BELIEVE THIS. YOU'RE DEVOUT! YOU OF ALL PEOPLE SHOULDN'T TRY TO STOP US PRACTICING OUR FAITH!
YOU BLUSTERING IDIOT, I'M NOT TELLING YOU TO STOP BELIEVING! I'M TELLING YOU TO STAY AWAY FROM THAT MARKER!
"FROM THAT MARKER", HUH? I KNEW IT.
GOOD-BYE, ABBOTT.
KLIK

DR. SCIARELLO TO SEE YOU, SIR.
THANK YOU, ALICE.
COME IN, DOCTOR. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

SIR, WE NEED TO MAKE THIS PROBLEM--THE DEPRESSIONS, INSOMNIA, ALL OF IT--OUR TOP PRIORITY.
I SHOULD HOPE YOU ALREADY ARE, DOCTOR. PRODUCTIVITY IS DOWN 15 PERCENT.

NOT JUST MEDICALLY. I DOUBT HANDING OUT SLEEPING PILLS IS GOING TO SOLVE THIS. I THINK THERE'S A DEEPER ROOT TO THE PROBLEM.

DON'T WE HAVE A CLINICAL PSYCHIATRIST?
DR. WELLAND, YES. BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT.
THEN I DON'T FOLLOW YOU.

THIS ALL STARTED AFTER WE FOUND THAT ARTIFACT. AND I DON'T BELIEVE IN COINCIDENCES.
I WANT TO EXAMINE IT THOROUGHLY. MAYBE IT'S RADIOACTIVE IN SOME WAY, OR--

OUT OF THE QUESTION. COME ON, DOCTOR, THIS IS ALL JUST DOWN TO STIR-CRAZY MINERS WHO'VE BEEN COOPED UP WITH BAD RECYCLED AIR FOR TOO LONG.
SIR, WITH RESPECT, I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS BEFORE. IF I COULD JUST EXAMINE--
I SAID NO.
NOW PLEASE, SEE YOURSELF OUT. I'M A BUSY MAN.
BY THE WAY... YOUR NURSE. WHAT DID YOU DO WITH THE--WITH HER BODY?
SHE'S IN THE MORGUE, OF COURSE. THE ISHIMURA WILL TAKE HER BACK HOME WHEN IT LEAVES. WHY?
I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW WE HAD A MORGUE.
IT'S PRETTY SMALL. DEATHS ON COLONIES ARE STILL RARE.
INTERESTING.
GOOD-BYE, DOCTOR.

YOU DID TELL CARTHUSIA THAT DOOR WASN'T OUR FAULT, RIGHT? HE KNOWS THAT?
HE KNOWS, JERRY.

Dig Site GL-426
WELL, THEN, NATALIA...
YOU MIND EXPLAINING TO ME WHY THE FUCK WE'RE STANDING OUT HERE INSTEAD OF P-SEC?

QUIT GRIPING. THINK HOW IMPORTANT THIS IS. THE FIRST REAL MARKER WE'VE FOUND IN TWO HUNDRED YEARS, AND WE GET TO SAFEGUARD IT.

HEY, HERE'S ABBOTT.
OVER HERE!
WAIT A MINUTE, WHAT DID YOU SAY? SINCE WHEN DID YOU CONVERT?

SORRY, ABBOTT, BUT YOU'VE ALL GOT TO STAY BEHIND THE CORDON.
UN-FUCKING-BELIEVABLE.

NATALIA, I'VE GOT A DOZEN PEOPLE HERE, ALL WANTING TO SEE IT. TO **EXPERIENCE** IT.
AND THEY CAN. FROM BEHIND THE CORDON.

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DENYING US. HAVE YOU SEEN THEM YET?
SEEN WHAT? THE SYMBOLS? YOU CAN'T MISS THEM.

THE **VISIONS.** WHEN I CAME DOWN HERE A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO, I SAW... SOMETHING INCREDIBLE. THIS IS THE REAL DEAL.
COME ON, LET US THROUGH.

NO ONE GETS THROUGH THE CORDON, AND **ESPECIALLY** NOT YOU. CARTHUSIA SINGLED YOU OUT.
MAYBE HE'S RIGHT, JERRY. WHAT HARM CAN THEY DO?
NO.

THEN WE'LL STAY HERE, AND WE'LL PRAY, AND WE'LL WAIT.
YOU'LL SEE..

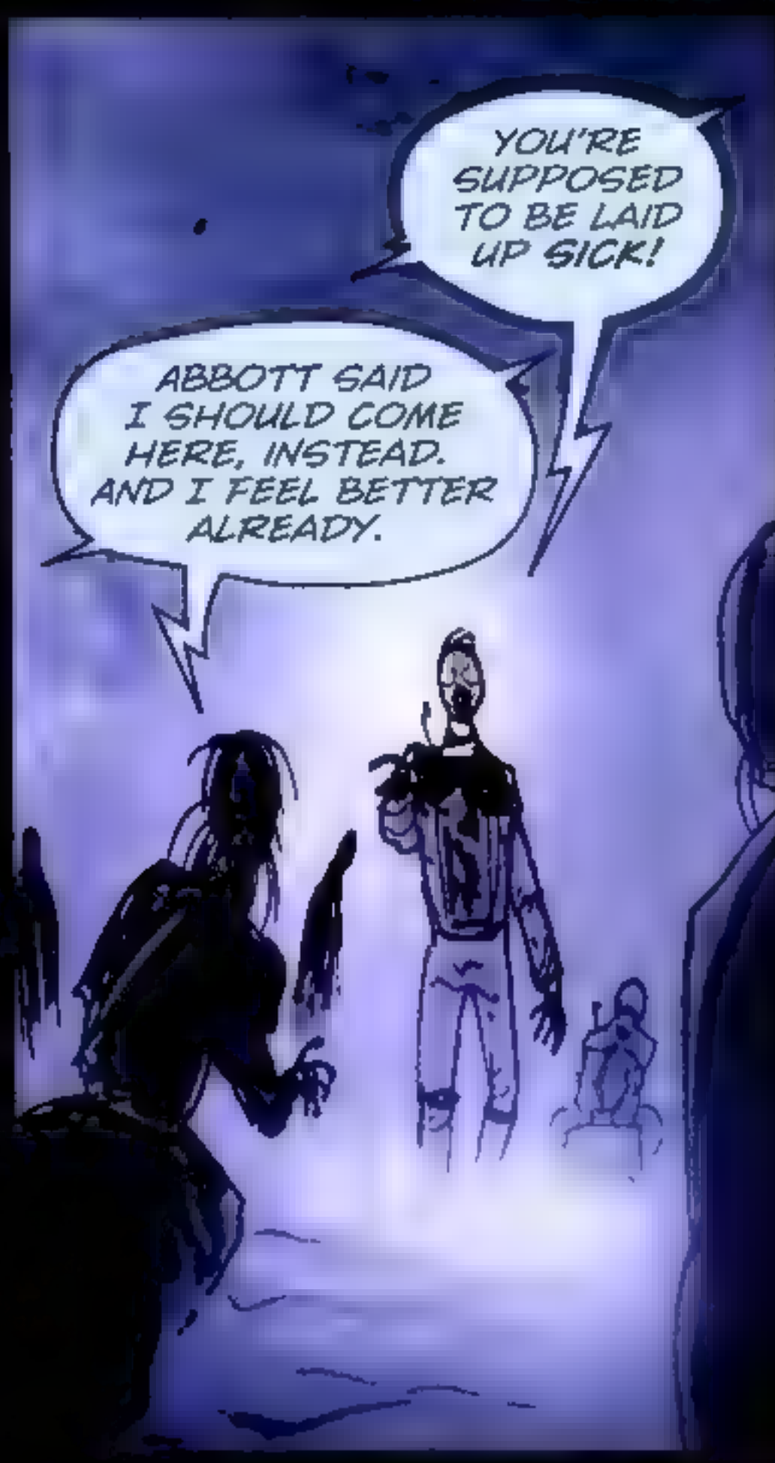
THANKS FOR HELPING ME OUT, SERGEANT.
NO PROBLEM. I'M WITH YOU, THERE'S SOME WEIRD SHIT GOING ON WITH THAT ROCK.
YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW GLAD I AM TO HEAR SOMEONE NOT CALL IT "THE MARKER".
AH, IT'S BULLSHIT. TRUST ME, I KNOW A THING OR TWO ABOUT UNITOLOGY.
YOUR PARTNER?
HELL, NO. I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW CORTEZ WAS A MEMBER UNTIL LAST WEEK.
WHERE IS SHE, ANYWAY? I THOUGHT SHE WAS GOING TO JOIN US.
SHE'S GOT WHATEVER HEADFUCK IS FREAKING OUT THE REST OF THE COLONY. WE KIND OF FELL OUT.
BECAUSE SHE'S A UNITOLOGIST?
BECAUSE SHE'S AN IDIOT.

THERE YOU GO.
HOLY SHIT. NOW I SEE IT WITH MY OWN EYES...

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
I HEARD ABOUT THIS. PILGRIMS, COMING OUT TO WORSHIP.
GOT YOUR KIT? THEN LET'S GET DOWN THERE.

SORRY, GUYS, THIS IS AS CLOSE AS YOU GET. YOU WANT TO JOIN THE PRAYERS, ABBOTT'S LEADING A GROUP OVER THERE.
CAN'T SAY I'M SURPRISED--

CORTEZ!


YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE LAID UP SICK!
ABBOTT SAID I SHOULD COME HERE, INSTEAD. AND I FEEL BETTER ALREADY.

THIS IS CRAZY. WHAT THE FUCK HAPPENED TO "I DON'T LET IT AFFECT MY WORK"?
THE MARKER CHANGES EVERYTHING, BRAM. HONESTLY, I FEEL SORRY FOR YOU. YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE MISSING.

I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT THIS BULLSHIT IS ABOUT! I LOST MY WIFE TO YOUR FUCKED-UP CULT, REMEMBER?
HEY, HEY! IS THERE A PROBLEM, HERE?

NO, KARLL. MY PARTNER JUST HASN'T SEEN THE LIGHT YET.
"SEEN THE LIGHT"? IF COMMANDER JAMES CATCHES YOU OUT HERE, ALL YOU'RE GONNA SEE IS YOUR SEVERANCE!

SOME THINGS IN LIFE ARE JUST TOO IMPORTANT, BRAM. DON'T YOU SEE THAT?
THINK YOU BETTER LEAVE THE LADY ALONE, BUDDY.

"BUDDY"?! I'M P-SEC, YOU MORON! AND SO'S SHE!

YOU'RE COMING BACK WITH ME, CORTEZ. I'M BOOKING YOU IN FOR A PSYCH EVAL.
NO!
LET GO OF HER!

YOU HAVE NO RIGHT. VERA IS HERE OF HER OWN FREE WILL.
FREE WILL? MY ASS! JUST WHAT KIND OF SCHEME ARE YOU PULLING HERE, ABBOTT?
NO SCHEME, SERGEANT. THIS IS OUR SACRED CALLING.
SACRED BULLSHIT. YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW IF IT'S REALLY A MARKER!
HEY, YOU GUYS! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE GUARDING THIS THING. GIVE ME SOME BACKUP, HERE!
YOU'RE DISTURBING THE PRAYER GROUP. YOU SHOULD LEAVE.
WHAT? IT'S THESE IDIOTS WHO SHOULD LEAVE!
NO, I DON'T THINK SO.
NOW GET BACK IN YOUR CRAWLER AND GO HOME.
COME ON, NEUMANN. THEY'RE NOT LISTENING.
SENSIBLE MAN, THE DOC. YOU SHOULD LISTEN TO HIM.
WHAT THE FUCK JUST HAPPENED?
I DON'T KNOW... BUT I DON'T WANT TO BE AROUND IT A SECOND LONGER.

NOT A THING.

YOU'RE *SHITTING* ME. MAYBE YOU NEED A BETTER SCANNER.

THIS IS WHAT THEY USE ON *SURVEY DIGS*. ALPHA, BETA, GAMMA, BLACK BAND, SHOCKPOINT, YOU NAME IT. AS FAR AS SCIENCE IS CONCERNED, IT'S JUST A ROCK.

I'VE WORKED WITH CORTEZ ON THREE COLONIES. I'M TELLING YOU, THAT JUST WASN'T HER AND THE MINERS...

I KNOW. THEY'RE ALWAYS ROWDY, BUT I'VE NEVER SEEN STAFF ACT LIKE THAT BEFORE.

WHETHER YOU CAN DETECT IT OR NOT, THAT ROCK IS BEHIND THIS SOMEHOW. IF I WASN'T SURE BEFORE, I AM NOW.

AS A DOCTOR, I'M ALWAYS LOATHE TO DENY SCIENCE.

BUT I AGREE. THIS CAN'T GO ON.

THAT'S THE LAST STRAW.
I EXPRESSLY TOLD HIM TO STAY AWAY FROM THE ARTIFACT.
HE CAME WITH A GUY FROM P-SEC, SIR. NEWMAN, OR SOMETHING?
NEUMANN. I KNOW HIM.
BUT THAT'S NOT REALLY THE PROBLEM. YOU ASKED ME TO KEEP AN EYE ON THE PILGRIMS, AND... WELL, THEY STARTED THREATENING THE P- SEC GUY.
IT GOT PRETTY HEATED. IF HIM AND THE DOC HADN'T LEFT, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN A FIGHT.
OVERZEALOUS IDIOTS. ALL RIGHT, I'LL TALK TO ABBOTT AND BRING THEM ALL IN.
BUT SIR, IT WASN'T JUST THE PILGRIMS. THE GUARDS WERE GETTING AGGRESSIVE, TOO.
HMMM.
THANK YOU, CARVER. LEAVE IT WITH ME

P-Sec HQ
HEY, BRAM. HAVE YOU SEEN THIS?
WHAT IS IT?
BEEN GOING ROUND THE INTRANET ALL DAY. SOMEONE GOT PAST THE GUARDS AND MADE A VIDLOG OF THE MARKER, UP CLOSE.
OR ONE OF THE GUARDS MADE IT. WHO'S IT FROM?
NOBODY KNOWS IT'S A HANDHELD, NOT A HELMET CAM, AND THE I.D. WAS WIPED.
LOOK AT THESE SYMBOLS... DO YOU THINK THEY'RE CARVED INTO IT? IT'S LIKE THEY'RE GLOWING.
THEY ARE. YOU CAN SEE THEM FROM TWO HUNDRED METERS AWAY.
HOW WOULD YOU KNOW?
WENT THERE WITH DOC SCIARELLO YESTERDAY.
YOU WENT OUTSIDE, WITHOUT LOGGING IT? JESUS CHRIST, BRAM!
RELAX, IT WAS ONLY FOR A COUPLE HOURS. ANYWAY, WHAT DO YOU CARE? PLEASE DON'T SAY YOU'RE CONVERTING.

AS IF. BUT LOOK AT THIS. A LOT OF THE SYMBOLS ARE REPEATED, AND ON THE ROCKS AROUND IT, LIKE IT'S A CODE, OR LANGUAGE.
OH, I GET IT. YOU'RE GEEKING OUT! HA!
OF COURSE. THIS IS INCREDIBLE! I MEAN IT LOOKS LIKE THERE ARE SIMILARITIES TO CLADISTIC MATH IN THERE...
I DUNNO, IT COULD BE COINCIDENCE. THERE'S ONLY SO MANY WAYS TO MARK A 2D SYMBOL, AND OLD HUMAN ALPHABETS OFTEN SHOWED ODD SIMILARITIES BETWEEN DISPARATE CULTURES...
WHAT?
SORRY, I KNOW THIS STUFF GETS YOU HOT. BUT THE CHURCH HAS BEEN TRYING TO DECIPHER THE BLACK MARKER FOR CENTURIES, AND THEY'VE GOT SQUAT.
SO THEY SAY.
ANYWAY, I'M GONNA TRY. WHO KNOWS, A FRESH PERSPECTIVE MIGHT BE ALL IT NEEDS.

YOU HAVE YOUR ORDERS.

I'D FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE IF YOU WERE COMING WITH US, SIR.
OUT OF THE QUESTION. I'LL SPEAK TO THEM DIRECTLY WHEN THEY RETURN.

WHAT IF THEY *REFUSE?* IT SOUNDS LIKE THEY REALLY WANT TO STAY...
THEN DON'T TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER. I'VE ASSIGNED YOU *EMERGENCY WEAPONRY.*
IN FACT, ARREST THEM REGARDLESS, ON MY AUTHORITY. I WANT TO KNOW WHO MADE THAT *VIDLOG!*
I'LL CALL *P-SEC,* ASK THEM TO ACCOMPANY US.
NO, YOU WON'T.
I CAN'T TRUST THEM, SECOND ENGINEER CARVER. THEY'RE *NOT DEVOUT.*
I UNDERSTAND. VERY GOOD, SIR.
ALTMAN BE PRAISED.

ALTMAN BE PRAISED.

HEY, GET OUT OF HERE! NO VISITS TO THE MARKER! CARTHUSIA'S ORDERS!

DROP THE CUTTER!
NOW, DESHYANOV!

NATALIA...
I WON'T LET THEM HURT IT, JERRY!
NATALIA, THEY'LL KILL YOU!

WE'RE NOT GOING TO HURT IT. WE'RE JUST HERE TO REPLACE YOU.
YOU'D SEE ME AGAIN, JERRY. YOU KNOW THAT NOW...

NO, NATALIA. YOU HEARD THE MAN. THEY'RE JUST GOING TO GUARD IT, LIKE WE HAVE.
BUT IT NEEDS US...

IT NEEDS ALL OF US. EVERYONE ON THE COLONY. THAT'S WHAT YOU SAID.
LET THEM HAVE THEIR TURN. RIGHT, GUYS?

RIGHT ON...
BITCH!
SNRK

I'M TELLING YOU, WE NEED TO JUST LEAVE THAT THING ALONE AND GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE.
OFFICER NEUMANN--
SERGEANT.
--THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT FIND.
IMPORTANT ENOUGH FOR PEOPLE TO DIE?
YOU'RE REACHING, COMMANDER. SOME MINERS GET THE COLONY CRAZIES, AND SUDDENLY IT'S BECAUSE WE FOUND A ROCK?
DON'T PULL THAT SHIT WITH ME, HANFORD. WE'VE GOT TWO DEAD ALREADY, AND THINGS ARE ONLY GETTING WORSE. WHO KNOWS WHAT THE TOLL WILL BE BY THE END OF THE WEEK?
I STRONGLY ADVISE YOU CALL CEC AND TELL THEM WE'RE PULLING OUT.
LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT. THIS OPERATION HAS ALREADY COST HUNDREDS OF BILLIONS OVER TWO AND A HALF YEARS. AEGIS VII HAS TRILLIONS WORTH OF SALEABLE RESOURCES.
BUT NOW, LESS THAN THREE WEEKS FROM PLANETCRACK, YOU WANT ME TO ABORT... BECAUSE A COUPLE OF MINERS DIED?
I'LL BE VERY CLEAR, COMMANDER. NOT A CHANCE.

BESIDES, YOU'LL GET YOUR WISH, IN A SENSE. JUST BE PATIENT.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

IN FOUR DAYS' TIME, THE ARTIFACT WILL BE LIFTED AND BROUGHT HERE, TO AWAIT THE ISHIMURA.
WHEN THE SHIP ARRIVES, IT WILL BE TRANSFERRED ON BOARD.

YOU'RE BRINGING IT IN TO THE COLONY? HOW MUCH FUCKING DAMAGE DO YOU WANT TO DO?
DON'T GET HYSTERICAL, SERGEANT.

YOU MEAN JUST LIKE EVERYONE ELSE AROUND HERE? ARE YOU BLIND?
GOOD-BYE, GENTLEMEN. THANKS FOR YOUR INPUT.

WHAT THE HELL DO WE DO NOW?
BRACE OURSELVES.

ALICE... GET ME CAPTAIN MATHIUS.

TO BE CONTINUED...

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